

Message Text

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SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN AND YUGOSLAV FOREIGN MINISTERS AGREE TO
INCREASE BILATERAL COOPERATION

REF: BELGRADE 720

1. DURING HIS THREE-DAY STAY FEBRUARY 23-26 IN VENEZUELA, YUGOSLAV FEDERAL SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS MILOS MINIC HELD SEVEN HOURS OF TALKS WITH VENEZUELAN FOREIGN MINISTER RAMON ESCOVAR SALOM AND MET WITH PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ. MINIC AND ESCOVAR AGREED TO EXCHANGE ECONOMIC MISSIONS, THE FIRST OF WHICH WILL BE A VISIT BY YUGOSLAV PETROLEUM EXPERTS TO VENEZUELA IN MARCH. IN A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF MINIC'S VISIT, VENEZUELA AND YUGOSLAVIA AGREED TO DRAW UP BILATERAL CONVENTIONS CONCERNING CULTURAL EXCHANGES AND SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION.

2. THE COMMUNIQUE ALSO TOUCHED ON OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST TO BOTH COUNTRIES. IT EMPHASIZED THE RIGHT OF ALL NATIONS, PARTICULARLY THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, TO PROTECT AND EXPLOIT THEIR NATURAL
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RESOURCES WITHOUT RESTRICTION, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO NATIONALIZE THEM.

MOREOVER THE COMMUNIQUE CONDEMNED THE USE OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PRESSURE AIMED AT LIMITING OR NEGATING THE RIGHTS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THE COMMUNIQUE NOTED THAT ESCOVAR HAD ACCEPTED AN INVITATION FROM MINIC TO VISIT YUGOSLAVIA.

3. DURING THEIR HOUR-LONG MEETING FEBRUARY 25, PRESIDENT PEREZ AND MINIC DISCUSSED INCREASED BILATERAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND REVIEWED INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS. IN STRESSING THE NEED FOR SOLIDARITY AMONG THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, PEREZ STATED HIS BELIEF THAT THIS SOLIDARITY

AND CURRENT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ARE INTERRELATED. MINIC PRESENTED TO PEREZ AN INVITATION FROM PRESIDENT TITO TO VISIT YUGOSLAVIA AT AN UNSPECIFIED DATE.

4. AT A BANQUET IN HIS HONOR FEBRUARY 24 MINIC STATED THAT YUGOSLAVIA

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FOLLOWS "WITH GREAT INTEREST" THE GOV'S EFFORTS FOR THE PROGRESS OF VENEZUELA. "WE KNEW THAT YUGOSLAVIA AND VENEZUELA'S VIEWS WERE CLOSE," MINIC ADDED, "BUT WE MUST SINCERELY STATE THAT AFTER THE TALKS WE HAVE JUST HELD, MY CONCLUSION IS THAT OUR VIEWS ARE EVEN CLOSER THAN WE HAD THOUGHT." MINIC SINGLED OUT THE STRUGGLE FOR MORE EQUITABLE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS AS BEING AN ISSUE ON WHICH VENEZUELA AND YUGOSLAVIA WERE IN AGREEMENT. IN HIS REMARKS ESCOVAR REFERRED TO THE NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SECURITY IN THE WORLD. HE SAID VENEZUELA HAD NEVER FAVORED CONFRONTATION. RATHER

VENEZUELA "ONLY WANTS TO EXPRESS ITS RIGHTS AND INTERESTS WITH DIGNITY

AND MORAL FORCE" AND HAD NO DESIRE TO OFFEND ANY COUNTRY, HE ADDED.

5. MINIC AND HIS PARTY MADE AN EXCURSION FEBRUARY 25 TO THE VENEZUELAN IRON MINING REGION OF GUAYANA IN THE COURSE OF WHICH THEY VISITED THE MINING ZONE, THE SIDOR STEEL MILL AND THE GURI HYDROELECTRIC DAM. IN A COMMENT TO THE PRESS MINIC SAID YUGOSLAVIA MIGHT INCREASE ITS IMPORTS OF VENEZUELAN IRON ORE IN THE FUTURE. ESCOVAR DESCRIBED HIS TALKS WITH MINIC AS "POSITIVE" AND CONFIRMED THAT THEY HAD DISCUSSED INCREASING TRADE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. ASKED WHETHER YUGOSLAVIA WANTED TO IMPORT OIL FROM VENEZUELA, ESCOVAR SAID OIL MATTERS HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED.

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6. MINIC DEPARTED VENEZUELA FEBRUARY 26 ON HIS RETURN JOURNEY TO YUGOSLAVIA. ACCOMPANYING HIM ON HIS VISIT TO VENEZUELA WERE HIS WIFE, MILKA MINIC, AND SEVERAL OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THE DIRECTOR FOR LATIN AMERICAN AFFAIRS IN THE YUGOSLAV FOREIGN MINISTRY, MOMCILO VUCEKOVIC.

7. COMMENT: MINIC'S VISIT TO VENEZUELA IS THE SECOND HIGH-LEVEL

VISIT FROM A COMMUNIST COUNTRY SINCE THE PEREZ ADMINISTRATION TOOK OFFICE, THE FIRST HAVING BEEN THE VISIT OF ROMANIAN PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU LAST YEAR. FOR VENEZUELA IT REPRESENTS A FURTHER INDICATION

OF ITS DESIRE TO DOPT AN OPEN STANCE TO ALL COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY THE SOCIALIST AND THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES. ALTHOUGH ESCOVAR DENIED DISCUSSING OIL MATTERS WITH MINIC, THERE MAY BE SOME TRUTH TO AN UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT THE YUGOSLAV PETROLEUM EXPERTS COMING HERE NEXT MONTH WILL ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN 30,000 BARRELS A DAY OF VENEZUELAN OIL AT FAVORABLE PRICES. WITHOUT A PRICE BREAK VENEZUELAN OIL WOULD NOT BE COMPETITIVE WITH MIDDLE EAST OIL IN YUGOSLAVIA.
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